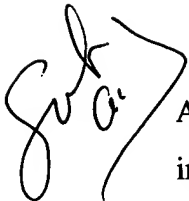


ATTRIBUTE TREE FOR MODELING VALUE OF MULTI-ATTRIBUTE
PRODUCTS/SERVICES FOR AN ONLINE TRADING SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE


 An electronic commerce system facilitates trading of product families that contain individual products with varying attributes. The product's attributes specify products within the product family that vary according to these attributes. Delta values are received from a user. The delta values represent differences in values of products in the product family. These differences in value are perceived by the user for each of the products specified by the attributes. The delta values are attached to the attributes to form a user attribute tree. The root of the attribute tree is the base product, while the leaves of the attribute tree represent various configurations of the product. Summing delta values along a path from the root to a leaf provides the additional value of that product configuration. A buyer's attribute tree contains the buyer's perceived values for many different product configurations. The buyer's attribute tree can be compared to a seller's attribute tree. The overlap of the buyer's and seller's attribute trees can be used to find an optimal product configuration for sale to the buyer.

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